



Check for ADA Compliance

Design Manual
Chapter 11A-0
Miscellaneous

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ADA is a non-discrimination law. Typical engineering guidelines and judgement do not apply to ADA regulations. ADA upgrades are required regardless of:

- Upgrade costs,
- Whether people with disabilities live in the area,
- The likelihood of a disabled person using the facility.

This means that if a feature is provided, it must be accessible to **ALL** users, including those with disabilities. The law states that:

No qualified person with a disability may be excluded from participating in, or denied the benefits of, the programs, services, and activities provided by state and local governments because of a disability.

Quick Tips:

- ADA is a Non-Discrimination Law.
- There is **No Design Exception** process for ADA compliant features.
- ADA features must be fully upgraded whenever a street, road, or highway is constructed or altered.

ADA Standards for Accessible Design (the ADA Standards)

The ADA Standards for Accessible Design, or the “ADA Standards”, refer to the requirements necessary to make a feature (physically) accessible to people with disabilities. The ADA Standards identify what features need to be accessible, and then provide the specific measurements, dimensions and other technical information needed to make the feature accessible. All features must be in strict compliance with ADA Standards. Additional information can be found in the [ADA Standards for Accessible Design](#).



There is **No Design Exception** process for ADA compliant features.

Features to check for ADA compliance:

- Bike Trails, see [Section 11A-1](#)
- Sidewalks, see [Section 11A-2](#)
- Curb Ramps, see [Section 11A-3](#)
- Roadway Profile (at sidewalk or trail crossings), see [Section 11A-1](#)
- Protruding Objects (near pedestrian routes)
- Signal Call Buttons
- Stairs
- Handrails, see [Section 11A-5](#)
- Bus Stops

All of the above features must also be compliant during construction (See Section [11A-4](#))

When upgrades are required

ADA features must be fully upgraded whenever a street, road, or highway is constructed or altered with the possible exception of these specialized projects:

- Painting
- Patching - no upgrades are required unless the following:
 - The patches are located at curb ramps.
 - The patches cover the majority of the intersection.
- Signal upgrades will require correct placement of signal call buttons - no upgrades to curb ramps and sidewalks are required unless the following:
 - The signal installation is new.
 - If there is a significant amount of concrete work associated with the project.

Curb ramps on sideroads may be excluded provided there is no change in the roadway within the normal crosswalk area. See Figure 1.

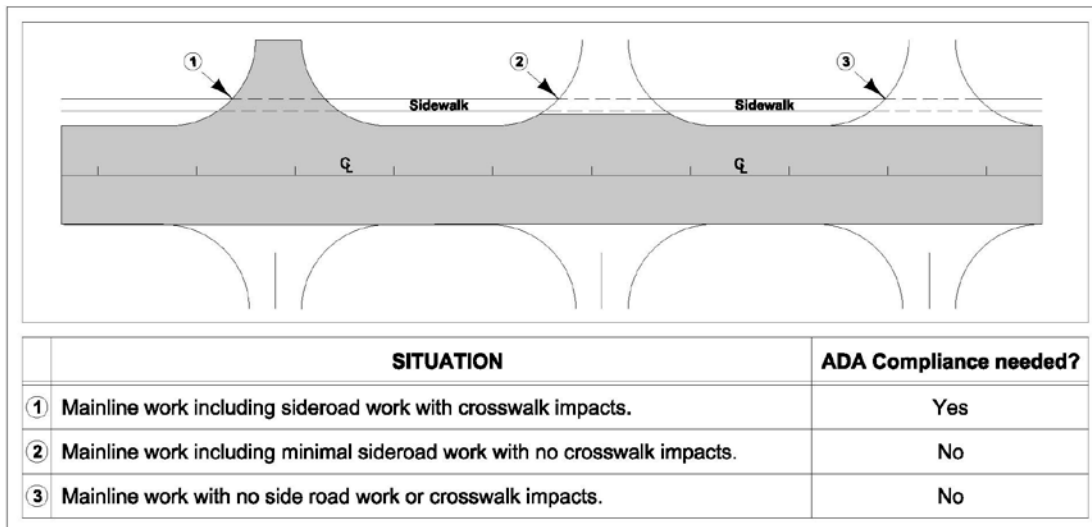


Figure 1: Plan view showing sideroad curb ramp situations.

Even though ADA compliance is not technically required in these locations, it is recommended to make ADA upgrades whenever feasible.

Transition Plan

The ADA law, passed in 1990, required public entities to upgrade all noncompliant features. Recognizing that it would be difficult to upgrade immediately, the law provides the opportunity for organizations to develop a transition plan. Iowa DOT completed a transition plan for all buildings in the early 90's and is currently working on a transition plan for all sidewalks and facilities on state right of way. An inventory of all facilities was completed in 2008. In order to comply with the law and fulfill the requirements of the transition plan, it is important that all facilities are upgraded during DOT projects.